

REMARKS

The examiner has rejected the independent claims (1, 23) under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious in view of Huang and Ulug.

Claims 1 and 23 have been cancelled, and replaced with a single new independent claim 24. In view of the amendment, the examiner is urged to reconsider and withdraw the rejection.

New claim 24 calls for CSMA communication in which a station desiring to setup a contention-free access interval can do so by contending for and winning access to the medium, and then transmitting a plurality of frames with a contention control field set to indicate that at least some other stations should not contend during the contention periods within that interval. A second station determines from the contention control information whether the second station is permitted to contend (some dependent claims call for the second station to compare the priority of a frame that it wants to send to the priority of the frame then being sent in the contention-free interval, and allows the second station to interrupt the contention-free transmission if the priority of the frame it wants to send is higher). It is not required that the first station send all of the frames making up the plurality of frames sent in the contention free interval, as the first station could delegate that right to another station; hence one of the new dependent claims adds the requirement that all of the plurality of frames be transmitted by the first station.

Ulug teaches a contention-based system in which a contention control bit is used to resolve contention for access to the medium. The bit is used to assure efficient recovery from a collision between frames. In the event of a collision, the "preempted" stations (those sending a frame that collided) follow a procedure to assure that each colliding station gets access to the medium to transmit its single frame. The station with the physical location furthest to the right in FIG. 2 has its packet transmitted first. Then the next closest "preempted" station to the right (i.e., the station involved in the collision that is closest to the right side of FIG. 2) turns on the control bit, and sends its frame. The other preempted stations hold off sending their frame while the control bit is on, but the next one in physical location (proceeding right to left in FIG. 2) immediately resumes when the control bit goes off. The process is repeated until all colliding frames are sent by the preempted station. Other stations not involved in the collision do not

contend during this period because the medium is in constant use as the colliding frames are sent, one by one.

Thus, Ulug uses the contention control bit in the contention resolution process (to choose who gains access to the medium) and then only allows a station to use it to facilitate transmission of a single frame (the one involved in the collision).

By contrast, the invention uses the contention control field not as part of contention resolution but after completion of contention resolution to allow a station to establish a contention free access interval for transmitting a plurality of frames (not just one frame, as in Ulug).

Huang adds nothing of relevance. Huang (col. 5, line 66 to col. 6, line 49) refers to stations detecting an empty slot during transmission of data packets (in advance of image packets). But detection of the empty slot has nothing to do with whether a station contends during a contention period, and there is nothing taught about using a contention control field to allow a station to establish a contention free access interval for transmission of a plurality of frames.

The examiner has crossed out publications on the 1449 Form included with our IDS of March 1, 2001, but has not explained why that was done. If new copies of the publications are needed, please contact the undersigned.

Three patent applications were also crossed out on the same 1449 Form, but we are submitting herewith a new IDS referencing the patents that issued on those applications.

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Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: _____

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